

Mar 22nd, 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

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Thompson, Jeremy, "The Role of Embodied Information in Becoming Anti-Fragile: Through the Lens of Ultramarathon Running" (2019). *FIMULAW*. 6.

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THE ROLE OF EMBODIED INFORMATION IN BECOMING ANTI-FRAGILE: THROUGH THE LENS OF ULTRAMARATHON RUNNING

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INFORMATION PRACTICE

- The term ‘information practice’ conceptualized here, is reflective of information and knowledge, which as Lloyd (2011) states, is socially constructed and reflective of “situated realities, ongoing practices, and arrangements that transpire through human coexistence” (p.285). ‘
- Information practice as understood for the purpose of my research is interested in human activity, where certain practices are shared that lead to a practical understanding or “know-how”, related to experiences with others while interacting in embodied and cognitive practices (Lloyd).

METHODOLOGY

- An ethnographic approach will be used in order to examine a specific community (ultramarathon runners) and their sub-culture within the larger context of outdoor users.
- The hallmark of ethnography is fieldwork, and for the purpose of this research I will use my position as an emic insider within this community, to collect data using the methods of auto-hermeneutic and autoethnographic field notes, participant observations and face to face interviews conducted while running.

INTRODUCITON

- The overarching question that guides this proposed research, asks ‘using the case of ultramarathon running, how do embodied information experiences in nature support antifragility and mental health and wellness?’
- Embodiment, for the purpose of this research, is viewed as an “integration of the body, the mind and the natural environment and an awareness of an emergent sensuous experience of the world” (Haskell, 1999, p. 156).
- Embodiment matters in this research due to the heightened awareness of the body as an object of intentionality, when engaged in practices that may result in one’s ability to become antifragile.
- Antifragility, put simply, is the opposite of fragility, whereby incidents of stress and disruption make an individual stronger and better able to deal with the next challenge (Nicolas-Taleb, 2012).
- Antifragility moves beyond resilience. Resilience, is something that neither breaks, nor improves whereas antifragility gets better.
- This proposed work is situated in the field of information practices and I view information practice through the lens of ultramarathon running – that is, an intense form of distance running that goes beyond the distance of a traditional marathon (26.2 miles) and generally is conducted on trails or in mountainous terrain (MacNairn, 2011).

GOALS OF RESEARCH

- The goal of this research is to explore the information practices of ultramarathon runners
- Evaluate embodied experiences while under physical and emotional strain, in shared social environments
- Evaluate opportunities for Anti-fragility
- Understand whether becoming antifragile through the shared acquisition of embodied knowledge, can provide tools beneficial for increased mental health.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. understand the significance of community generated knowledge acquisition through shared experiences in natural landscapes.
2. understand how information gathered through bodily contact with nature and immersion in a community, may impact knowledge production leading to the ability to become antifragile.
3. assess whether becoming antifragile, has the ability to influence participants’ mental health and day to day well-being.
4. develop research that links participation in natural landscapes to understanding, sense of place, empowerment, motivation and positive mental health outcomes.

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